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Joint Inspection Unit

Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the second follow-up to the management review of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

Summary

The present report contains the comments of the Secretary-General on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit in its second follow-up to the management review of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (JIU/REP/2009/2). The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights welcomes the second follow-up report and the recognition it provides to the efforts undertaken by the Office to diversify its staff. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights would also like to record its appreciation of the constructive and collaborative approach employed by the Joint Inspection Unit in the preparation of this report.

* A/64/150.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 61/159 on the composition of the staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the General Assembly, at its sixty-first session, took note of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the follow-up to the management review of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/61/115) and the note of the Secretary-General thereon (A/61/115/Add.1), and requested the Joint Inspection Unit to assist the Human Rights Council to monitor systematically the implementation of the resolution, inter alia, by submitting to the Human Rights Council in May 2009 a follow-up comprehensive report on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit. In agreement with the Joint Inspection Unit, its current report will be presented at the twelfth session of the Human Rights Council in September 2009.

2. The first management review of OHCHR is contained in document JIU/REP/2003/6 (A/59/65-E/2004/48) and included 10 recommendations. The first follow-up report (A/61/115) considered that only four recommendations needed further action by OHCHR and/or the Secretariat. The present report contains three recommendations, one addressed to the High Commissioner for Human Rights and two to the Human Rights Council.

II. Comments on specific recommendations

Recommendation 1

The High Commissioner should report to the Human Rights Council, on an annual basis, on measures taken, including specific targets and deadlines set by OHCHR in compliance with relevant General Assembly mandates, to improve geographical distribution of staff and the subsequent implementation and results therein.

3. OHCHR notes that this is already done through the annual report on the composition of the staff of the Office submitted to the Human Rights Council (see A/HRC/10/45; A/HRC/7/57). In these reports, the Office provides statistical information about the staff on board, in both geographical and non-geographical posts, as well as details regarding measures taken to continuously improve the geographic diversity of the Office. These reports supplement the official report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat that is submitted annually to the General Assembly and follows up on the requests from the Assembly contained in its resolutions 61/159 and 62/236.

4. Therefore, the High Commissioner is already fully complying with recommendation 1 and is committed to continuing to provide the Human Rights Council with full information regarding the composition of her staff and the actions being taken to further enhance the geographical diversity of the Office.

Recommendation 2

The Human Rights Council should monitor, on a biennial basis, OHCHR staffing to ensure compliance with the mandates of the United Nations General Assembly.

5. The Secretary-General recalls that the Fifth Committee is the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with responsibility for administrative and budgetary matters. Assembly resolution 61/159 reaffirms this fact. Accordingly, OHCHR is not in full agreement with this recommendation. While the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights does indeed provide the Human Rights Council with detailed documentation on the composition of its staff, the Fifth Committee has the role of monitoring of staffing in accordance with Assembly mandates. In this context, the basis for the monitoring of all Secretariat staffing remains the system of desirable ranges mandated by the Assembly.

6. OHCHR therefore proposes that it continue to provide an annual report to the Human Rights Council on the composition of the staff and the measures taken in compliance with General Assembly mandates to improve the geographical diversity of the Office in line with recommendation 1, for information and review purposes.

Recommendation 3

The Human Rights Council should further encourage Member States to promote the selection and financing of candidates from developing countries in the Associate Expert Programme for OHCHR.

7. OHCHR fully endorses this recommendation and would welcome the expansion of the Associate Expert Programme through the participation of more Member States in the programme and in the financing of candidates from developing countries. The High Commissioner for Human Rights does indeed raise this issue with the representatives of Member States whenever the opportunity arises, encouraging them to both join and expand the programme, and will continue to do so.

III. Conclusion

8. The composition of the staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has been the topic of a great many reports and initiatives over recent years and the Office has made many efforts to improve in this area. The Secretary-General thus welcomes this report and the recognition it provides to the progress made to date in addressing the matter.